

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

IO-13 ACDA-07 SCCT-01 SY-05 USSS-00 A-01 OC-06 CCO-00

OPR-02 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-07 FEAE-00 /105 W

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O R 071459Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8471

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: JULY 7 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORT INCREASED FIGHTING IN
LEBANON; TUNISIAN AND BAHRAINI FONMINS DEPART DAMASCUS
FOR HOME

1. SYRIAN MEDIA REPORTED TRIPARTITI COMMITTEE MEETING JULY 6
AND ANOTHER MORNING JULY 7 FOLLOWING WHICH TUNISIAN FONMIN
DEPARTED FOR TUNIS AND BAHRAINI FONMIN ANNOUNCED PLANS TO
RETURN TO MANAMA NEXT DAY. MEDIA CLAIMED THAT FIGHTING IN
LEBANON HAS ESCALATED IN SHIKKA AND IN MOUNTAIN AREAS
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AROUND ALEY. CLASHES AROUND SIDON HAVE ALSO APPARENTLY

STEPPED UP; LOCAL EMPLOYEE TOLD BY RESIDENT FROM JAZZIN AREA THAT SYRIAN FORCES ENGAGED THERE TODAY IN SKIRMISHES WITH PALESTINIAN TROOPS WHICH RESULTED IN DEATH OF SYRIAN CAPTAIN AND TWO ENLISTED MEN PLUS DESTRUCTION OF TWO SYRIAN LORRIES. (COMMENT: ON OTHER HAND US OFFICIAL IN CONVOY TRAVELLING BEIRUT-SIDON-NABATIYYEH-DAMASCUS TODAY NOTED NO FIGHTING.)

2. PLA COMMANDER BYDAYRI ESCORTED ARAB AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS JULY 6 ON TOUR OF YARMUK PALESTINIAN CAMP IN ATTEMPT TO PROVE LIFE GOING ON AS NORMAL AND FALSITY OF CLAIMS THAT PALESTINIANS IN CAMP AREA BEING PERSECUTED. HE ALSO REITERATED DEFENSE OF SYRIAN ACTIONS IN LEBANON, ALTHOUGH MEDIA DID NOT REPORT HIS COMMENT -- MADE ALSO TO AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT SAME DAY IN PRIVATE INTERVIEW -- THAT PARTITION OF LEBANON "INEVITABLE" AND ALREADY EXISTING DE FACTO, THUS ECHOING COMMENTS MADE BY PRESIDENT'S BROTHER, DR. RISA'T AL-ASAD, LI MID-JUNE.

3. BAATH PARTY NATIONAL COMMAND LUMINARY FADEL AL-ANSARI TOLD KUWAIT'S AL-QABAS THAT SYRIA TRYING TO PROTECT LEBANESE UNITY AND HAD ENTERED LEBANON TO DEFEND PALESTINIAN CAMPS FROM INVASION AND SIEGE. HE RIDICULED IRAQ'S DISPATCH OF MILITARY FORCES TO BORDER, AS DID DEFMIN TLAS IN ARTICLE EXCERPTED FROM MILITARY JOURNAL. TLAS DENOUNCED IRAQI HYPOCRISY FOR URGING CREATION OF REJECTION FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL ON ONE HAND AND UNDERCUTTING SYRIAN STRENGTH BY BLOCKING FLOW OF OIL THROUGH PIPELINE ON OTHER. HE REAFFIRMED SYRIAN COMMITMENT TO OBTAINING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BY PEACEFUL MEANS RATHER THAN WAR, " WHICH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WILL NOT PERMIT."

4. COLUMNISTS CONTINUED TO HAMMER AWAY AT IMPERIALIST-ZIONIST PLOT AGAINST LEBANON AND TO DEFEND SYRO-PALESTINIAN COOPERATION.

5. COMMENT: VISIT TO YARMUK CAMP CONDUCTED BY BUDAYRI MAY BE PART OF NEW SYRIAN CAMPAIGN TO PATCH UP ITS DIFFERENCES WITH PALESTINIANS. ONE PALESTINIAN OBSERVER OF LOCAL SCENE TOLD US THAT RECENT EDITORIAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN LOCAL PRESS, WHICH SPOKE OF "TRANSCENDING MISTAKES AND IRRITATIONS REGARDLESS OF PAST POSITIONS," INTERPRETED BY MANY IN PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY AS HINT REGIME WOULD LIKE TO RESOLVE ITS DISPUTE WITH FATAH AND OTHER PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS. WE PREFER TO SUSPEND JUDGEMENT UNTIL WE SEE MORE EVIDENCE OF THIS TREND.
MURPHY

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